

Good Food for Lewiston/Auburn Council
Guide for reviewing the Goals & Objectives document
September 2012

The Goals & Objectives document is the product of an enormous amount of research on the local food system, community dialog, and serious thinking. Understanding it and making it useful demands that a good deal of context be provided about how it came to be, and the intention for how it will be used by the Community Food Council. This “primer” for the Goals & Objectives captures the ideas that the Development Team (the group responsible for recruiting the council and organizing its first meetings) hopes you will keep in mind.

The process preceding the Goals & Objectives

The Goals & Objectives document is the result of a comprehensive study of the local food system, a Community Food Assessment (CFA), that involved hundreds of hours of research. Community discussions followed the study, centered upon the successes and failures of our food system, as well as the many roles that food plays in our lives. These discussions also captured the desires of the community regarding how it wishes to see the food system changed to better serve everyone.

A charrette in May of 2012 gathered key stakeholders to prioritize the Goals and Objectives emerging from the CFA and community dialogs. This was accomplished by having breakout groups focus on each of the Goal Areas. Each Goal Area contained a suite of supporting goals and objectives distilled from the community dialogs. The groups were tasked with prioritizing the most important goals and the most important objectives supporting those goals. The result is captured in the Goals & Objectives document. Goal areas are arranged in alphabetical order. Within each, the first goal and first objective are the highest priorities set by the breakout groups. Any subsequent goals prioritized at the charrette are reflected by their order of appearance in the Goals & Objectives document. All prioritized items are in **bold font**. (Those following the bolded items are not in any particular order of importance).

In an attempt to streamline the Goals & Objectives document, Development Team members worked to combine objectives where applicable, move items to goal areas where they more comfortably fit, and clarify language. A new Goal Area, Policy Development, was created and populated with a goal and objectives pulled from other areas. When priorities were moved, they were placed in rank order in their new position. For example, Objective A3a fit better under Goal A3 than under A2, where it was placed at the charrette, and was moved, but still appears as the top Objective for the new goal.

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Considerations

The Goals and Objectives should be interpreted as coming from the voices of the community, rather than the voice of the council. The document is expressing, “This is what the community wants and needs,” and not, “This is what the council needs to do.” Thus, Objective D1a, “Offer an increased number and variety of community-based food education programs,” is not expressing that the council needs to offer these programs, but that there is a need for these programs to be offered by some group or groups within the community.

The Goals and Objectives represent a sort of community strategic food plan, and the council’s job will be to bring the document to life by setting an action plan, and engaging partners to take on appropriate aspects of it. The document is not a set of marching orders that lists all that the council must do. Clearly, there is far too much work to be done for the group to accomplish on its own, and a critical step in meeting the goals will be finding and coordinating other groups in the community whose work addresses the same ends.

At this point, the council should not be concerned with getting to actionable items. Instead, attention should be placed on becoming familiar with the nature of the work to be done, and reflecting on how the individual roles that each of you play relate to this work. *Please read the entire document before the meeting.* When you read it, ask yourself, “How can my skills, knowledge, and connections be put to use in addressing these goals?” We invite you to note any goals or objectives that you see as top priorities when reviewing the document – this feedback will inform the council’s work plan at a later juncture.

While it is essential that you become familiar with the entire document, please note that at the coming meeting we will confine our work to the top goal within each goal area. At the meeting, the council will generate criteria for evaluating the supporting objectives, with the intention of narrowing focus to those items that could be engaged directly and immediately, versus those that are better suited to partners or are long-range in nature. This process will yield the basis for subsequent prioritizing and then action planning. At that time, you will have access to a multitude of ideas captured during the community dialogs that will serve as fodder for action strategies.